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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 180010

FOLLOWING REPEAT JIDDA 3923 ACTION SECSTATE INFO ALGIERS
AMMAN BEIRUT KUWAIT PARIS DHAHRAN USINT BAGHDAD 10 SEPT

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 3923

DEPT PASS CAIRO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, SA, FR, KU

SUBJ: FEDAYEEN SEIZURE OF SAUDI EMBASSY IN PARIS

SUMMARY: SAUDI EMBASSY EMPLOYEES HELD HOSTAGE FOUR DAYS
BY ARAB COMMANDOES RETURNED TO HEROES' WELCOME AT JIDDA
AIRPORT SEPT 9. PRESS COVERAGE BY AND LARGE CONSISTS OF
REJOICING OVER SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME, WITH RESENTFUL, SOME-
WHAT CONFUSED, TONE EXPRESSING MISTURE OF INDIGNATION
AT WHAT OCCURRED AND WONDERING WHY, IN VIEW SAG ASSIST-
ANCE TO PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATIONS, SAUDIS WERE TARGET.
SEVERAL SAUDI CONTACTS HAVE INDICATED BEST SOLUTION
WOULD BE FOR FEDAYEEN TO BE TURNED OVER TO PLO TO HANDLE.
SAUDIS MAY CONCEIVABLY URGE TOUGH PUNISHMENT FOR HIJACK-
ERS, BUT EMBASSY DOUBTS IT WILL AFFECT, OVER LONG RUN,
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CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SAG AND ARAFAT. END SUMMARY.

1. SINCE SEPT 6, HEADLINES OF ALL JIDDA PRESS HAVE CENTERED AROUND SEIZURE OF SAUDI EMPLOYEES AT PARIS EMBASSY BY ARMED PALESTINIANS OR COMMANDOES. FINAL SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME OF INCIDENT WAS OF COURSE RECEIVED WITH AUDIBLE SIGH OF RELIEF IN KINGDOM. CROWN PRINCE KHALID, ACTING AS REGENT IN ABSENCE OF FAISAL AT ALGIERS SUMMIT, AND MININT PRINCE FAHD WERE AT JIDDA AIRPORT TO RECEIVE RELEASED HOSTAGES SEPT 9. MANY SAG OFFICIALS WERE PRESENT, AND SAUDI HOSTAGES GIVEN NOT ONLY PROMOTIONS AND MEDALS BUT NEW CARS AS WELL.

2. APPARENTLY SEVERAL MEMBERS OF LOCAL FATAH/PLO OFFICE ALSO INVITED BY SAG TO ATTEND AIRPORT WELCOMING. FONOFF OFFICIAL REPORTED MANY OF HIS GOVT COLLEAGUES ANNOYED AT PRESENCE OF FEDAYEEN REPS. SAUDIS APPARENTLY DO NOT BELIEVE ARAFAT OR FATAH INVOLVED, BUT SAME FONOFF OFFICIAL NOTED THAT SAG DOES INDEED HAVE CERTAIN INFLUENCE OVER PLO; HE BELIEVES AT LEAST THERE WILL BE DEMANDS BY SAG THAT FATAH DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO PREVENT SUCH INCIDENTS FROM REOCCURRING.

3. PRINCE FAHD IN EARLIER REMARKS TO SAUDI NEWS AGENCY SET THE TONE FOR JIDDA PRESS COMMENTARY, AS WELL, IT APPEARS, FOR SAUDI REACTION IN GENERAL. FAHD NOTED THAT COMMANDO ACTION HAD CLEARLY HURT ARABS AND ISLAM, AS WELL AS NOBLE FEDAYEEN GOALS. HE ADDED THAT SAUDI ARABIA HAS GIVEN MORAL AND MATERIAL ASSISTANCE, BOTH SECRETLY AND PUBLICLY, TO PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATIONS SO THAT THERE CAN BE NO CONFUSION OVER BASIC SAG SUPPORT OF FEDAYEEN; BUT THAT THOSE ARABS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PARIS ACTION WERE ONLY SERVING ZIONISM AND ENEMIES OF THE ARAB AND ISLAMIC FATHERLAND. PRESS COMMENTARY CENTERED ON THESE THEMES AND ALSO REFLECTED SOMEWHAT WOUNDED SENSE OF PRIDE THAT SAUDIS, IN VIEW OF THEIR ASSISTANCE TO FATAH AND PLO, WOULD BE TARGET THIS ACTIVITY. "WHAT IS WANTED OF US?" ONE EDITORIAL ASKED. ALL PRESS COMMENTARY EMPHASIZED NEED FOR PUNISHING THESE "CORRUPT ELEMENTS."

4. FONOFF OFFICIAL, SPEAKING PERSONALLY BUT EXPRESSING CONFIDENTIAL

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OPINIONS OF OTHER SAG OFFICIALS, NOTED THAT BEST SOLUTION FOR ALL WOULD BE FOR KUWAITIS TO TURN TERRORISTS OVER TO PLO IN ORDER THAT PUNISHMENT BE METED OUT BY THEM. NOT ONLY WOULD THIS NICELY ABSOLVE SAUDI ARABIA OF ANY SUBSEQUENT BACKLASH (FROM LIBYA, IRAQ OR ELSEWHERE), BUT COULD ALSO TEND STRENGTHEN ARAFAT'S LEADERSHIP AND PERHAPS HELP PREVENT FUTURE OCCURRENCES OF THIS KIND. SEPT 10 AL-B'ILAAD, QUOTING REUTERS FROM KUWAIT SEPT 9, NOTED

THAT KUWAIT AUTHORITIES, HOWEVER, IN LIEU OF REQUEST FROM SAUDIS OR PLO, WERE UNDERTAKING OWN INVESTIGATION OF TERRORISTS, WHO REMAINED IN THEIR CUSTODY.

COMMENT: CURRENT SAUDI SUPPORT FOR FATAH AND ARAFAT SPRINGS FROM KING'S VERY FIRM CONVICTION THAT HE PRESENTS "GOOD" FEDAYEEN WHO NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR TERRORISM WHICH IS WORK OF RADICALS AND IRRESPONSIBLE SPLINTER ELEMENTS, SOME OF WHOM MAY EVEN BE UNDER ZIONIST INFLUENCE AND CONTROL. WE WOULD GUESS OTHERS IN INNER CIRCLE WILL FEEL THAT IF SAUDI ARABIA IS ALREADY CONSIDERED TARGET BY RADICALS AND LUNATIC FRINGE PALESTINIANS, THEN SO MUCH MORE REASON FOR NOT ADDING FATAH AND ARAFAT TO LIST OF SAG ENEMIES BY HOLDING THEM RESPONSIBLE FOR PARIS INCIDENT.

STILL WE THINK SAUDI ANGER AT BEING SINGLED OUT AMONG ARABS FOR HUMILIATING TREATMENT MAY LEAVE KING AND GOVERNMENT IN MOOD TO MAKE THIS DEEP INDIGNATION FELT SOMEHOW. THIS MIGHT TAKE FORM QUIETLY PRESSING TERRORISTS' CUSTODIANS, WHETHER PLO OR KUWAITIS, TAKE STRONGEST PUNITIVE ACTION. IF LATTER NOT FORTHCOMING THEN PERHAPS KING MIGHT BE INCLINED PRESS ARAFAT TO PROVE HIS FRIENDSHIP FOR SAG BY ASSURING MISCREANTS BROUGHT TO JUSTICE. THACHER UNQUOTE RUSH

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